



Mercy Justice



“Our world is being torn apart by wars and violence...In various countries, conflicts and old divisions from the past are re-emerging. I especially ask Christians communities throughout the world to offer a radiant and attractive witness of fraternal communion. Let everyone admire how you care for one another, and how you encourage and accompany one another.” —Pope Francis, [Evangelii Gaudium \(“The Joy of the Gospel”\)](#), #99, November 24, 2013

Looking at Ukraine war through the lens of our Critical Concerns

At this time of great upheaval, suffering and deep uncertainty for the people of Ukraine, the Sisters of Mercy Justice Team extends an invitation to reflect on this current moment through the lens of our Critical Concerns.

- **WOMEN:** The invasion is placing heavy burdens on women. They are forced to flee with their children while Ukrainian men between the ages of 18 and 60 are required to remain in the country and take up arms. Families are separated which only compounds the stress of living under siege. [Journalists have observed that the Ukrainians at the borders are almost all women and children.](#)
- **RACISM:** Media reports on the conflict [reveal an implicit racism](#). Some have expressed shock and surprise that this war is taking place in a “civilized” European (white) country and sorrow that blue-eyed, blond people are being killed. [Persons fleeing Ukraine have been described as well-dressed and prosperous](#), leaving in their cars, not like refugees from Africa or the Middle East.
- **EARTH:** [Ukraine’s nuclear power plants represent a serious danger](#) in a time of war. Even if they are not bombed, other disruptions such as a loss of power to cool the reactors, insufficient fuel to run backup generators or loss of key operating personnel could result in a catastrophic meltdown with long-term environmental consequences.
- **IMMIGRATION:** Like all wars, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine is forcing people to migrate. [It is estimated that more than 500,000 Ukrainians have already left.](#) They are going to Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Hungary and Moldova.
- **NONVIOLENCE:** The Russian attack on Ukraine demonstrates once again the futility of violence. At the Angelus on February 27, Pope Francis said – “I repeat: put down your weapons! God is with the peacemakers, not with those who use violence. Because those who love peace, as the Italian Constitution states, ‘reject war as an instrument of aggression against the freedom of other peoples and as a means for the settlement of international disputes.’”



The Sisters of Mercy [issued a statement](#) immediately after Russia initiated hostilities last week, calling to prayer all those whom it reaches and urging political leaders to seek an end to the conflict by nonviolent means.

Grateful for your steadfast prayer at all times,

Sisters of Mercy Justice Team